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no. 203

SEX  
*and the*  
HUMAN PSYCHE

*Toward a Contemporary Ethic*

John Yungblut  
*Pendle Hill Pamphlet 203*

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*About the Author/A* graduate of Harvard College, John Yungblut received his theological training at the Harvard Divinity School and the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He served in the ministry of the Episcopal Church for some twenty years, during most of which time he was a member of the Wider Quaker Fellowship. In 1960 he became a member of the Religious Society of Friends. For the following eight years he was Director of the Quaker House program in civil rights and peace education in Atlanta. After serving as Director of the International Student House in Washington from 1968-1972, he and his wife June came to their present work as teachers at Pendle Hill.

For more than thirty years John has been engaged in personal counseling with individuals of all ages. During the more recent of those years he has felt a special concern that Friends enter into dialogue in order to evolve a distinctive testimony relative to contemporary sex. One result of his concern is the following pamphlet, the substance of which was delivered as the J. Bernard Walton Lecture at Southeastern Yearly Meeting in Avon Park, Florida, on March 29, 1975.

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OUR COVER: Detail from the title page of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. One of the figures is enveloped in flames, the other is floating on clouds, suggesting that even great marriages are, in an existential and Jungian sense, marriages of heaven and hell.

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SEX. The very word has a somewhat harsh and cacophonous ring to it. Associations that cluster about it for all of us are conflicting, as contrapuntal and dissonant as the more passionate works of Chopin. But the music incessantly plays on in our minds and spirits, demanding that we listen in order to compose our own resolution to the moral issues raised.

## THE NATURE OF THE CONCERN AND THE APPROACH

There is abroad today widespread sexual experimentation outside the bonds of marriage. Many are participating in so-called "open marriage," where one or both partners are entering into sexual relationship with another person, sometimes as an additional heterosexual liaison, sometimes with one of the same sex. Formerly such relationships outside of marriage were usually clandestine. Now they are often quite open. Moreover, in our culture, there is far greater freedom of sexual expression among single persons than heretofore. One reason is, of course, the availability of comparatively safe and reliable contraceptives. But we recognize that the reasons for the so-called sexual revolution are very complex and relate to changing philosophical, ideological, and religious world views as well.

At the Friends General Conference in 1972 some young Friends, responding to the gay liberation movement, expressed the conviction that homosexual relationships are to be celebrated like marriage. In 1974, at the Conference, there was not only a witness to the reality of the potential for bisexuality in some individuals, but also open encouragement of participation by a single individual in both homosexual and heterosexual relationships contemporaneously. The special speaker who was advocating this position insisted that there is only one sexual relation-

ship which is inherently wrong: the act of rape, whether homosexual or heterosexual. Apparently, for consenting adults, there is to be no absolute limitation to the overt expression of sexual fantasy. This was not part of the official program arranged by the planners of the Conference. Yet there was widespread interest, especially on the part of young Friends. It is good, I believe, that Friends should afford a patient hearing to such a special program. But those of us who take a different view have a responsibility to make carefully considered response.

Over the last few years there has been disciplined effort on the part of several Yearly Meetings to rewrite their official queries. In a set of queries now under consideration by an Eastern Yearly Meeting is one relating to sexual behavior. It reads as follows:

Do you accept the gift of human sexuality in its various forms as evidence of God's providence for the enrichment of life? Do you recognize the communicative importance and joyful potential of this aspect of personality? Do you face honestly and openly the changing sexual mores of our time?

This proposed query's implied caution against judgmental attitudes and commendation of openness of mind is certainly all to the good. I welcome as admirable and right the emphasis on the God-given faculty of sexuality as intended for the enrichment of life in both communication and joyfulness. This may be recognized as a new and contemporary note, worthy to be sounded. But the query is as notable for what it does not say as for what it says. There is the veiled expression "sexuality in its various forms" with reference to "God's providence for the enrichment of life." Is this an implied acceptance of *all* forms of sexuality as having equal claim for enrichment? And where is there any semblance of guidelines, explicit or implicit, for the making of ethical decisions in this sphere?

It is concern about this current state of vacuity in an area so fraught with potential for good or ill, especially for young

Friends in quest of identity and personal fulfillment, that prompts me to suggest that we are in a position to know a good deal more about relevant testimony than we are currently acknowledging.

Need we really be as adrift on a vast sea, rudderless and without compass, as we appear to be? I think not. What I want to do in this essay is to propose some criteria for a contemporary sex ethic in the hope that this may stimulate others to think through their position, looking toward the possibility, ultimately, of a distinctive Friends testimony on sex.

Now where shall we turn in our quest for viable criteria for a contemporary sex ethic? For many the testimony of the Bible, however valued, can no longer be conclusive. The authority we seek must be more universal, contemporary, and experimental. George Fox provides us excellent precedent when he tells us in his *Journal*:

For I saw in that light and spirit which were before the scriptures were given forth, that all, if they would know God or Christ, or the scriptures aright, must come to that spirit by which they that gave them forth were led and taught.<sup>1</sup>

He placed his ultimate confidence in personal revelation of Truth through the Inward Light but was delighted to find thereafter that what "the Lord had opened in [him] . . . was agreeable to them."<sup>2</sup> Similarly we may not begin our quest with the scriptures but trust that we may come to "that same spirit by which they that gave them forth were led and taught."

In like manner, we may not turn to the authority of the Church or the teaching of a particular culture. Therefore, in the words of one of the early Church fathers, Tertullian, I propose to appeal as ultimate authority to the "testimony of the

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<sup>1</sup> *George Fox, The Journal of George Fox* (with an Introduction by Henry J. Cadbury), (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.



soul," as far as I am given to know this testimony. The only laws I shall accept as binding are those that I believe are engraved upon our hearts, the tolerances within which our given physiological, psychological, and spiritual natures would seem to operate for maximum health and fulfillment.

Is there any way of arriving at such knowledge? Not in an exact, scientific sense that offers documented, conclusive proof. But I believe we can discern some directions that human sexuality takes that are more fulfilling, more integrating than others. There are three basic sources which may afford intimations concerning the testimony of the soul. Two of these constitute recently acquired knowledge and wisdom that is still accumulating: the nature of the evolutionary process of which we are a part, and the expanding insights emerging from the findings of depth psychology. The third is an ancient and perennial fountain of wisdom: direct, personal, mystical experience, like that to which George Fox looked for authority.

These three sources, I believe, offer enough evidence for discerning what we may justifiably describe as the testimony of the soul. I am not here suggesting that this testimony will provide definitive answers to all the complex questions that address themselves to us in given, existential situations. Rather, I am maintaining that this testimony does afford general guide lines, a reliable compass and chart with reference to sexual behavior for what must inevitably remain for all of us, in some sense, an individual journey even within a lifelong relationship.

I write as a male, and from a heterosexual orientation. This constitutes in some sense my bias and my limitation. At the same time, I am happy to count among my personal friends a number of homosexuals, both men and women. Over many years I have counseled with many persons of all varieties of sexual orientation. I believe that we are all potentially bisexual in the nature of our psyches because of our inherently androgynous psychological make-up in terms of the animus and anima

mythology. This fact should provide us all a measure of capacity for vicarious identification with one another. There is no place for rejection or condemnation—only for mutual confirmation and support as persons of infinite value, indwelt by the same living Christ. If I speak with passion and conviction, arising out of my own experience and reflection, I trust this will not be mistaken for the presumption of a judgmental attitude. On this most delicate theme I would speak tenderly from one solitude to another.

What I want to share with you has to do with quality and depth in the sexual relationship and those accompanying virtues which, I believe, enable it to enrich and ennoble the rest of life.

### TESTIMONY AFFORDED BY EVOLUTION

We live and move and have our being, in the most profound sense, by virtue of the evolutionary process, whether one thinks of it as God's continuing creation or not. If there is a testimony of the soul, would it not spring in part from that process from which the human soul has emerged? When Teilhard de Chardin was desperately looking for some reassurance in the presence of what he called "the malady of space-time" and "sickness of the dead-end," that is, the angst that arises from "not being sure, and not seeing how [one] ever could be sure that there is an outcome—a suitable outcome—to that evolution," he arrived at a steadying insight:

We have only to think and to walk in the direction in which the lines passed by evolution take on their maximum coherence.<sup>3</sup>

Confronted by the possibility of meaninglessness in the process itself, Teilhard discovered meaning and coherence by becoming

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<sup>3</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 233.

attentive to the laws within which the process operated and the directions that had marked its forward movement. "The lines passed by evolution," according to Teilhard, included: a movement from simplicity to complexity within a context of ever more extraordinary interior unity or integration; an expansion of consciousness until the animal, man, arrives, who is able to respond even to values beyond those reported by the senses; a quality of "withinness" which bears the mystery of what a given species, man for example, may become in interaction with evolving ecological conditions. Perhaps, then, in seeking a contemporary sex ethic, we would do well "to think and to walk in the direction in which the lines passed by evolution take on their maximum coherence."

Man is the most complex of all animals. He is more aware of his total environment than any other animal. We may assume that he is still evolving and that the promise of still higher forms of consciousness is not yet exhausted. At the same time he remains an animal, related to all other animals on the tree of life. With them he shares the sexual instinct which is the built-in drive toward reproduction, the force by which the process moves forward, perpetuating itself. And in man we perceive an accompanying drive whose dimension is a kind of upreach toward a higher form of consciousness, representing a better and a nobler life, perhaps presaging "the new man." Together these two drives constitute an *élan vital*. One is on-going; one is upward-reaching. Their joint movement may be thought of as spiraling upward. We may perhaps see this evolving edge of man's consciousness in the developed mystics. All men have the mystical faculty of experiencing identification and perceiving relatedness. In some it is much more developed than in others.

The sexual instinct has then behind it all the force of the tidal wave of evolution itself. In contrast with the law of entropy, by which matter in motion appears to be running down and cooling off, life appears to be gaining momentum and



warming up. Even as it consumes energy, it generates more. Next to the instinct to eat and to drink in order to stay alive, the sexual instinct is the most important for survival of the species. But in man another deeply ingrained instinct also makes itself known: the instinct of religion, which is to bind everything into one bundle around the highest to which one aspires. This is the instinct which makes it possible for man to evolve upward into the new man through the consciousness-raising quality of the mystical faculty.

Now what can we learn relevant to a sexual ethic from these two drives? How do these lines passed by evolution assume their maximum coherence with reference to human sexual behavior? It would seem clear, initially, that the heterosexual relationship has been assigned a special meaning and function. It is not only the reproduction of the species that is here involved; it is also that a sustained heterosexual relationship between one man and one woman may well afford the most congenial incubator for nourishing the mysterious aspect of upreach which is distinct but inseparable from the merely on-going aspect. Monogamy is not merely a culturally-induced phenomenon. It would appear to be an experiment with the weight of evolution behind it for man as well as for certain other species.

We have learned from Freud the incalculable and all-pervasive potency of the sexual drive. Everyone must recognize this if he is not to be self-deceived. Its strength is such that it *will* find expression, conscious or unconscious, overt or sublimated. If it is diverted from the usual channel of heterosexual expression by reason of a set of complex psychological and social factors it may well incline toward homosexual expression. It would appear, on Jungian grounds as we have already suggested, that there is a bisexual potential in all persons, at least until experience, influence, reflection and habit provide one prevailing orientation.

The important thing to recognize here is the power of the

sexual instinct within the vast creative milieu in which it has arisen. I am suggesting that the kind of enduring concern and care of one man and one woman for each other may provide the best chance of carefully nurturing the promise of upreach hidden within the individual child who is the offspring of this union. This is not to stand in judgment on individuals involved in homosexual relationships. I have known many such that are of far better quality than many heterosexual relationships. Nor is it to deny that many people of homosexual orientation may play a very constructive role in the nurturing of children. It is to say only that evolution has not endowed such relationships with the same meaning and role within the context of the ongoing creative process. It might be argued that since the species must now control its reproduction, sexual energy may well be directed toward homosexual expression. But the argument would seem an accommodation to a current crisis in population, not inherently valid in its own right. The further questions of multiple sexual relationships, homosexual, heterosexual and bisexual, for the individual within this context we shall consider presently.

## THE TESTIMONY OF DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

As Teilhard de Chardin with unrelenting passion sought "meaning" in the comprehensive milieu of evolution itself, so Carl Jung sought meaning in the evolution of the human psyche within the span of life of the individual. "There is much that suggests that as Teilhard was visited by profound anxiety until the weight of field observation and mystical experience tilted the scales toward perception of meaning in evolution, so Jung experienced the same kind of concern until the weight of his clinical observations in the practice of analysis and his own characteristic mystical faculty persuaded him that there was at least justification for hope. He wrote toward the end of his life:

If meaninglessness were absolutely preponderant, the meaningfulness of life would vanish to an increasing degree with each step in our development. But that is—or it seems to me—not the case. Probably, as in all metaphysical questions, both are true: Life is—or has—meaning and meaninglessness. I cherish the anxious hope that meaning will preponderate and win the battle.<sup>4</sup>

He also wrote from his long experience as a physician and curé of souls: "A psychoneurosis must be understood, ultimately, as the suffering of a soul which has not discovered its meaning."<sup>5</sup> Jung gave to the process by which a soul or a self discovers the maximum meaning of which it is capable the name "individuation." Around this idea constellated Jung's own "myth of meaning." He believed that individuation can be accomplished only by the recognition on the part of the person that he is "duplex, not merely simplex," that he has an unconscious as a counterpart to his conscious activities, that the vast depths of the unconscious contain the clues to the nature of the real self and are the source from which all authentic religious experience springs. Only by becoming attentive to the unconscious can one learn his real identity, learn to develop integrity, and so become one, whole, individuated person.

This involves an understanding of what Jung called the "shadow" in the unconscious: dynamic aspects of the personality that have been repressed, counterbalancing and compensating tendencies which do not find current expression on the conscious level. The shadow can be demonic. It can contain destructive elements that, unbridled, would work the disintegration of the psyche. But it can also serve the *daemon*, the monitor, the

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<sup>4</sup> C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage Book, 1967), pp. 358f.

<sup>5</sup> C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion: West and East* (London and New York; 2nd printing, with corrections, 1963), p. 497.

real self. The conscious self must learn to recognize in order to befriend and to disarm the demons that lurk in the unconscious.

Further, Jung identified in the unconscious certain archetypal drives to which he gave the names animus and anima. All men have a feminine component in the psyche, represented by the anima, as all women have a masculine component, designated by the animus. The health of the soul depends upon achieving a balance reflected in the conscious self between these components. From this mythological description of the nature of the unconscious one can see in the animus and anima the psychological roots of homosexual and bisexual attraction. These in turn are conditioned by early influence, experience, and consequent proclivity. We have become familiar with some of the various theories concerning the kind of environmental influence that may produce homosexual orientation. And of course there is also the possibility of early influences that may later inhibit *any* satisfying sexual experience, as well as factors which can incline toward various fixations or perversions of the sexual energy.

There are two aspects of the self to which I want especially to call attention: the extraordinary complexity of the psychosomatic unity in man, and the potential for constructive growth and fulfillment. As the animal ascends in the evolutionary scale, measured by the extent and quality of consciousness, the psychosomatic unity becomes ever more remarkable. When it appears at its peak in the developed human being do we not characteristically say that a person is a man or woman "for all seasons"? Such persons bear the unmistakable stamp of authentic identity. This identity is substantiated in manifest integrity. Interiorly the left hand is always aware of what the right hand is about. There is no moral duplicity, no childish or naive attempt to have one's cake and to eat it at the same time, no grasping for incompatible experiences and relationships. We say the person is all one. He has a center. Others readily per-



ceive this person as transparent. The diaphanous quality of wholeness shines through. The orientation of this person may be homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual.

Such a person never stops growing because there is always need for the interior labor of assimilating into this integrity new knowledge and new relationships. The individuation process never ends as long as one's faculties are retained. The quest for purity of heart is never completed. "Purity of heart is to will one thing," as Kierkegaard well knew. This one thing is the good. There is thus reflected on the plane of the life of the spirit this drive characteristic of the entire evolutionary process: integration in the context of growing complexity. Kierkegaard relentlessly pressed the question: "Are you always conscious of being an individual? . . . Even in that most intimate of human relationships, marriage, are you always conscious of that still more intimate relationship, that which you bear to yourself as an individual before God?" He proceeds to develop the implied query, "and as an individual before God do you strive to develop purity of heart, which is to will one thing, the good?" Presumably, this good has about it the marks of the spirit: compassion, tenderness, gentleness, long-suffering, love, adoration, and aspiration.

The quality of the love involved is ultimately the only sound basis for judgment with reference to any sexual relationship. I would embrace as my own point of view the beautiful and powerful statement with which Jung concluded an address to a young audience which he entitled, "The Love-Problem of the Student."

Love is not a cheap matter; let us therefore beware not to cheapen it. All our evil qualities, our egotism, our cowardice, our so-called worldly wisdom, our greed, all these things would like to persuade us not to take love seriously. But love will only reward us when we do take it seriously. I must even regard it as a misfortune that nowadays the sexual question is

spoken of as something distinct from love. The two problems should not be separated, for when there is a sexual problem it can only be solved by love. Every other solution would be a harmful surrogate. Sexuality released as sexuality is brutish. But as an expression of love sexuality is hallowed. Never ask therefore what a man does, but how he does it. Does he act from love and in a spirit of love, then he serves a god, and whatever he may do, it is not our business to judge, for it is ennobled.<sup>6</sup>

This was written more than fifty years ago. I myself aspire to the position with which he brought that address to a close: "I trust these remarks will have made it clear that I make no sort of moral judgment about sexuality as a natural phenomenon, but prefer to make moral judgments dependent upon the way it is expressed."<sup>7</sup> Jung was concerned about the accompanying quality of love and the degree to which a given relationship furthered individuation.

## DO THESE TESTIMONIES CONSTITUTE A BASIS FOR A CONTEMPORARY SEX ETHIC?

Do the observations we have made thus far from evolution and depth psychology point to laws that could be said in some sense to be inscribed upon our inward parts? For the human species I believe the monogamous pattern of sexual behavior is a response to such laws. This pattern is not a matter of relative "mores" produced by cultural ideosyncracies, as so many of our contemporaries would have us believe. Monogamy is not a fortuitous, cultural experiment that the discovery of a

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<sup>6</sup> C. G. Jung, *Contributions to Analytical Psychology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928), p. 224.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

revolutionary birth control pill can suddenly render outmoded and superseded.

Granted the fear of pregnancy for countless human beings provided an additional strong motivation for faithfulness in the practice of monogamy. But I believe the principle of monogamy conforms to the demands of the unconscious as well as the demands of the ongoing and the upreaching characteristics of our continuing evolution. So delicate and so complex are the factors affecting the development of the psyche as it moves toward individuation that its best chance of winning and retaining identity and achieving fulfillment in love would seem to indicate the built-in wisdom of the monogamous relationship.

On the human level, the sexual relationship involves an investment of one's whole being, not merely one's body. In sexual intimacy words of endearment are characteristically spoken that reflect a meeting of many aspects of the self of those involved. It is potentially a meeting of one constellation of wholeness with another such constellation. Deep responds unto deep. If there is not such a meeting in depth, of whose inward and spiritual grace the sexual act is an outward and visible sign, then something very divisive is taking place, however unrecognized. Passion may flow between the two. There may be great immediate satisfaction and release. But the act is less than *it can be* between human beings.

What makes multiple, contemporaneous, sexual relationships wrong for the individual is not that Biblical, Church, or cultural precepts are violated but that the very drive to achieve identity and integrity as a human being is threatened. At its lowest level such relationships are so superficial that two bodies are mutually stimulating each other toward orgasm, by-passing vast areas of the unconscious as well as the conscious that demand assimilation. My body is me as much as my mind and my spirit are me. To pretend that it can be otherwise is folly. Old Testament writers who described the nature of sin as folly were better

psychologists than contemporary advocates of multiple sexual involvement. The human psyche is simply not built for promiscuity. Higher consciousness and more refined integrity require limiting sexual intimacy to one sustained relationship. Plural relationships result inevitably either in shallowness or want of integrity, or both.

There is also the social dimension of all sexual relationship. It is as much folly to assume that a sex ethic can be reduced with impunity to a principle of "consenting adults" as to assume that one can indulge one's sexual drive with an individual without heeding in the psyche the inherent demand of evolution: "assimilate or perish." In sexual behavior no man is an island. We are all part of the main. Not to have the left hand know what the right hand is about, to assume that one's private sexual behavior effects no one else not directly involved, is absurd. It is the ultimate naiveté. Even in America where our self-image is so profoundly affected by the individualism fostered by our "frontier" past, men and women remain social animals.

For personal individuation and fulfillment we need integration into a community as well as interior integration. Indeed the two are one process. If I express my sexuality in relationships that tend to give the lie to each other and cannot be openly integrated with other relationships in which I find myself involved as a member of a community, I am embarked on a disintegrating course both within the specific sexual relationship and within the community. No matter how great the immediate satisfaction and excitement, in the long run I am running in the face of the deepest demands of my own self. I am disobeying laws inscribed on my own heart. I am deliberately, however unintentionally and unconsciously, putting my own identity in jeopardy, risking the health of my own psyche. Such multiple relationships may be exciting and afford the illusion of greater freedom for a season, but cannot contribute accumulating associations and satisfactions for the advancing years.



In his book, *The Seduction of the Spirit*,<sup>8</sup> Harvey Cox speaks of the nuclear family as one of the social institutions that may be gradually becoming anachronistic and pleads for acceptance of an expanding pluralism of social institutions in its stead. I should myself applaud some of the experimentation that brings clusters of families together in various forms of association for economic benefit as well as cultural enrichment. Margaret Mead has lent her support to such experimentation. I believe there may be great value in other experimentation with extended families retaining within a familial unit grandparents and other relatives and those adopted as "relatives." Many single individuals desperately need inclusion in small groups living together as families. But I do not believe that the nuclear family is in danger of out-running its service to the evolution of the species in the foreseeable future. Nor do I believe that in all the experimentation in all cultures within recorded time there has arisen a social institution comparable to the nuclear or extended family for surrounding the child with the quality of love and security needed for the early years of development. Usually, no other two people have as much of themselves invested and therefore as much motivation for tender love and demanding service as the two to whom the child owes its birth.

For human sexuality to constitute not only the motivating power for the preservation of the species but a contributing force within the other crucial evolutionary drive, upreach or aspiration, it seems well that it be channeled by monogamous intent. The expanding expression and deepening quality of the love for each other, through the years, of a man and a woman through loyalty, long-suffering, sacrifice, mutual devotion to a third, God within each other, is one of the most potent energies dedicated to the realization of the new man. Of course most men and

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<sup>8</sup> Harvey Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit* (New York: A Touchstone Book, Simon and Schuster, 1973).

women will continue to be sexually attracted from time to time by an individual other than the chosen one or spouse. That attraction must find sublimation if it is to be assimilated and integrated both socially and individually.

Freud held that civilization itself had been built in large part upon repression of the sexual drive. He meant that unbridled sexual expression would have brought about non-productive dissipation of an enormous quantity of energy. Sublimated and channeled, this energy has been put to work in the building of cultures. But still more blessed are they who know what they do! In depth psychological terms, it is better to suppress than to repress. More integration between the conscious and the unconscious can be thereby achieved. Repressed energy is always in danger of uncontrolled and destructive outbursts. Not only does the conscious suppression of sexual energy in forms of chosen sublimation free men and women to make more creative contributions to society and to culture; it enables them to direct these energies toward more profound individuation and spiritual growth.

When some of our contemporaries speak of the celebration of sexual energy in diverse contemporaneous or serial relationships, do we not need to consider the dispersion of the self that must be involved, the enormous dissipation of energy in directions which must inevitably prove less productive because they do not build toward accumulating satisfaction? Instead of putting sexual energy to work in the direction of enhanced meaning for their personal lives within the context of the expanding family, they are investing it in relationships that will become increasingly meaningless because shortlived and extraneous. Moreover, this meaninglessness will be imposed on the future of a psyche increasingly in need of meaning as the individual advances toward late middle and old age.

Very little place is left in some of these current philosophies of sexual "freedom" for the incalculably potent energy of sus-

tained romantic love. Indeed, the direction is toward an ultimate cynicism with reference to all romance. I am suggesting that unless a sexual relationship is monogamous and has at least the potential of permanence it cannot be as fully gratifying as it is capable of being nor as rich and deep an expression of love as it might be. Any one of several contemporaneous sexual relationships could be more fulfilling and more profoundly loving if it were the only one, and bore the promise of life-long continuity in the investment of the self. This has nothing to do with mores or temporal, expedient, cultural customs! I am talking about what I believe to be laws springing from the depths of the creative process of evolution itself and inherited as part of the within-ness conveyed by our very genes at birth.

Further, it is my conviction that it is not the ecclesiastical or the legal sanction that bestows chastity and beauty upon a union. It is the nature of the inward intent of the man and woman and the quality of their love for each other. In this sense all true marriages are made in heaven, or rather within the holy of holies which is the selfhood of each individual. The union of two young people whose love for each other springs from one wholeness to another and has at least the intent of permanence, whether legalized by church or civil ceremony or not, can be as sacred as any so formalized, and far more than many, depending on the quality and sincerity of the commitment. Only God, "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid" is in a position to judge. Such a union, along with the pursuit of genuine vocation, is the greatest aid to the discovery of identity and the process of individuation. There are many sound reasons for the postponement of legal marriage in individual cases, for a season. But there must always be openness. "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive."<sup>9</sup> And the very open-

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<sup>9</sup> Sir Walter Scott, Introduction to *Marmion*, Canto VI, Stanza 17.

ness will occasion limitations within our current culture on freedom of movement by those—family, friends and strangers—who disapprove the nature of the relationship. Obtaining housing and relating creatively to neighbors and the wider community may be more difficult. Nor is this to be blamed entirely on “mores.” Clarity and social consideration are also involved. I incline to think that just in proportion as such a union is confirmed in daily communion there will be an inevitable desire to draw friends and relatives together to celebrate the union that has already been consummated, and to make of it a social as well as personal contract.

Moreover, there do come occasions when a union, entered upon with the best of intentions, no longer is a genuine union. The reasons may be extensive and complicated. Always the burden of proof, it seems to me, should be on separation when there has been profound investment of the two in each other. Always the dissolution of the union will be more difficult for one than the other. But for the same reasons noted with regard to non-marital relationships, sexual union in marriage can be a divisive and disintegrating force if one or both are not bringing to it the whole person. And formal marriage in which there is no sexual union of a fulfilling nature is not real marriage, save when medical or age considerations so dictate. Of course Kierkegaard's query still applies: “Even in that most intimate of human relationships, marriage, are you aware of that still more intimate relationship you have to yourself before God?” This relationship may require divorce, after one or both individuals concerned have received the benefit of objective counseling over a period of time, judged by the same criteria we have been considering: individuation, integrity, personal growth, quality of love.

Much has been spoken and written about “open marriage” in recent years. If what is meant is mutual encouragement of abiding warm friendships outside marriage on the part of both with members of the opposite sex, I believe it is a sound principle



and a practice which will enrich the union. The price that must be paid, however, I believe, is the disciplined sublimation by both of any other sexual attraction. But if what is meant, as is often currently the case, is extra-marital sexual relationship then I cannot agree as to its validity and value. For one thing, it is inconceivable, in an "open marriage" that both partners could feel equally fulfilled on however temporary a basis. With reference to such an agreement for freedom, does it not seem inevitable in its implementation that one of the two should always be more hurt than the other who gave major encouragement to the experiment? In the long run both are hurt, and, as I have earlier suggested, for reasons having to do with integrity and wholeness. The complexities of the human psyche are such that either an extra-marital relationship is too shallow and casual to bring satisfaction, or so involving and consuming that the earlier relationship is undone. Again, it is not mores that constitute the barrier but the human potential for greater love.

Once again, Jung puts for us the built-in demands of the potential in the psyche for higher forms of love:

To love belong the depth and loyalty of feeling, without which love is not love but mere caprice. To me love will always engage in lasting, responsible ties. It needs freedom only for the choice but not for its accomplishment. Every true, deep love is a sacrifice. A man sacrifices his possibilities, or, to put it better, the illusion of his possibilities. If this sacrifice is not made his illusions hinder the realization of the deep and responsible feeling, and accordingly the possibility of experiencing real love is also denied him.<sup>10</sup>

We must recognize of course that unwholesome and aberrant forms of heterosexual relationships are far more of a threat to the health of our contemporary society than comparable forms of homosexuality. The false models of the man-woman relation-

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<sup>10</sup> Jung, *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, p. 223.

ship which we continue to hold up for emulation, with their male exploitative overtones and their casual nature, do infinitely more damage than any current exploitative forms of homosexuality because such vastly larger numbers of persons are affected.

Moreover, any kind of judgment on the individual homosexual is wrong. The orientation and motivation are too complex psychologically to be fully understood, and the individual is not responsible for the earliest influences brought to bear. But the exercise of judgment with regard to relative fulfillment of these two courses for sexual energy for those capable of either is incumbent on us all, especially upon parents and those in a position to influence the young.

## THE TESTIMONY OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

The nature of mystical consciousness involves the experience of identification and the perception of inter-relatedness. Of course mystical experience may take an infinite variety of forms, but these are its basic characteristics. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the mystical faculty is present, whether developed or not, in all human beings by virtue of their being human. This form of consciousness is the evolving edge in man. It is the point at which he is in process of becoming the new man, man's successor, the son of man. It is his potential for realizing presently, in some measure, the coming enhancement of life. It is the capacity to love more profoundly. It induces the experience of agapé love. If we would attain our maximum fulfillment as individuals and thereby serve the entire creative process of evolution in man, then we must do all we can to cultivate this richest treasure of the psyche, the contemplative capacity, and the agapé love which it fosters.

It is this faculty which enables us to see and to hear that of God in others and in ourselves. It enables us to recognize that the God so perceived in another and the God within ourselves is one and the same God, that the very ground of our being is one. This faculty was revealed to the developed mystics long before the modern science of ecology revealed the interaction and interpenetration of all things, animate and inanimate. It is indeed one world in which all things co-inhere. There is no ultimate isolation or independence. It is important to experience solitude and to enter profoundly into its depths in order to discover one's real identity as a self. But behold! there at the depths of this solitude is not only the self but the Self. Still more, at the depths of solitude there awaits us the purest experience of genuine solidarity. There we meet for the first time all those we know and love as they really are. Only for the developed contemplative or mystic does romantic love realize its full potential. The love for the beloved and the love for God at their highest are inextricably interwoven, as with Beatrice and Dante.

The quality of the union becomes itself a means of salvation for the two. And this same union, the mystery of what Buber called the in-betweenness, becomes a channel of grace and a genuine ministry to all who come in close contact with the two. John Donne, who was himself blessed with such a union (having experienced more secular forms of love), called this bestowal itself a form of canonization:

Call us what you will, we are made such by love;  
Call her one, me another fly,  
We are Tapers too, and at our own cost die,  
And we in us find the Eagle and the Dove  
The Phoenix riddle hath more wit  
By us, we two being one, are it.  
So to the neutral thing both sexes fit,  
We die and rise the same, and prove  
Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live for love,  
And, if unfit for tombs and hearse  
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;  
And if no piece of chronicle we prove,  
We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms.  
As well a well wrought urn becomes  
The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,  
And by these hymns all shall approve  
Us canonized for Love.<sup>11</sup>

For such a love the traditional vow requires appropriate expansion: "until death do us part, and until death do us again unite." Such high romance and the pursuit of holiness of life, far from conflicting, mutually support each other. One of the tragedies of so-called free love is the accompanying disparagement of genuine romance in its traditional form and the loss of the enabling power and motivation such romance provides for so many other areas of fulfillment in life. Of course a sustained homosexual relationship can also have elements of high romance. This too can be a foretaste of the love of God, as it was for Plato. But the outreach in concentric circles of expanding love is rarely comparable to the monogamous heterosexual experience. The reasons for this, I am persuaded, are not wholly cultural.

There is an important corollary to the mystical experience of identification and inter-relatedness. It is the experience of simultaneity, the recognition of another law of the psyche; only that form of relationship is valid which can be harmoniously integrated with all other relationships the individual currently sustains. The "all-seeing eye" here is not the implied threat of religious or cultural tradition or a transcendent God, relentlessly bent on justice, but is buried in the very fabric and substance of the nature of the psyche itself and the laws inscribed within,

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<sup>11</sup> *John Donne* (New York: Laurel Poetry Series, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), p. 32.



which determine the nature of its fulfillment. Purity of heart is to will one thing: the good. In this area I believe that to will the good and to love more deeply means to relate to only one person sexually and this with the intent, at least, of life duration. Only such concentration and commitment is compatible with the fully open life.

X Chastity is purity of heart and depth of love applied to one's sexual energy. The vow of chastity has usually been associated with monks and nuns and has been intended to imply total abstinence from sexual union. But an abiding, exclusive sexual relationship, whether heterosexual or homosexual, in which there is a meeting of the real selves of each, has quite as much claim upon this word symbol from a spiritual point of view.

A chaste marriage, whether it has become a legally binding social contract as yet or not, is one in which one man and one woman, not only for the sake of their own individuation and spiritual growth but in a profound sense on behalf of all mankind, pour into this one relationship all the potential for goodness and beauty and fulfillment which the mystery of the sexual endowment has bestowed upon them. It is the little half acre Providence has provided for their cultivation. They engage in the physical sacrament of their mutual devotion not only with a sense of the consummation of their love but with the recognition that it is a symbol of the way in which the species, man, goes forward and reaches upward toward the new man.

It is not that the two persons involved in such beatified love could not have found another person with whom sexual union in such purity of heart might have been realized. That a marriage is made in heaven should not, I think, mean that there is no other individual on earth with whom each of the two could have found a comparable union. It is not that more casual unions, "not asking for sacrament or sacrifice," (to borrow a phrase from Bernstein's Mass) might not have afforded, had they been approached in such "purity of heart," comparable

fulfillment. It is not that homosexual love cannot also be chaste, sacramental and sacrificial, thereby also reflecting the divine origin of all erotic love. It is only a question of that relationship which can best fuse erotic and agapé love for the fulfillment of the individual and the service of others whose lives are touched by the union.

Love having inward homosexual associations, but sublimated into various forms of sacrificial service, has often been an enormously constructive and creative force in the building of religious and cultural institutions. The very sublimation would appear in some measure to energize and to consecrate the vocation. Witness a great succession of priests, educators, artists. The homosexual orientation is certainly compatible with the experience of profound mystical union with other persons and with society at large. It may well be that abiding homosexual relationships should be consecrated by formal religious ceremony as are heterosexual marriages. But it seems unlikely to me that such a union is capable of fostering individuation along as comprehensive lines as the heterosexual. For one thing, the heterosexual relationship involves the "coincidence of opposites," physiologically as well as psychologically, and this would seem to afford an opportunity for the further enrichment of individuation.

I know I am presenting a counsel of perfection. No marriage achieves this level in a sustained way. But are we not bidden to become, that is, *to want to be* perfect? The chaste union moreover, in marriage, is one in which sexual intercourse is indulged only when it is equally desired by both. Since sexual desire in woman is more cyclical in its intensity it means that the man should await the opportunity for mutual fulfillment at her bidding, recognizing, because of the sustained quality of the rapport, the subtle communication of her readiness. It is the woman who is penetrated. Undesired union is unacceptable for her. But this sacrament of romantic, erotic love, on its highest

level is not to be reserved for those rare occasions when procreation is intended. It is a good in itself, one aspect of "the good" to be consecrated and celebrated for its own sake as one of the great gifts of creation. In such a context erotic love betrays, rather reveals, its divine origin.

The extraordinary miracle is that this sexual union is not only a good in itself but nourishes, purges, purifies, quickens, enhances all other aspects of the relationship. It contributes immeasurably not only to physical but to psychical and spiritual health as well. At its best it even places its silent seal upon the meeting of two solitudes. It does indeed symbolize, as the Book of Common Prayer proclaims, "the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church," the marriage of God and humanity in man and woman.

Does all this sound too idealistic? Then let me call to witness one final time that hard-headed psychologist, C. G. Jung. His lyricism may be more acceptable than mine:

Love has more than one element in common with religious conviction; it demands an unconditioned attitude and it expects complete surrender. Only that believer who yields himself wholly to God partakes in the manifestation of divine grace. Similarly, love reveals its highest mysteries and wonder only to him who is capable of unconditioned surrender and loyalty of feeling. Because this is so hard, few indeed of mortal men can boast of achieving it. But just because the most devoted and truest love is also the most beautiful let no man seek that which could make love easy. He is a sorry knight of his lady who recoils from the difficulty of love. Love is like God: both give themselves only to their bravest knights.<sup>12</sup>

I have here presented personal convictions arising out of my own experience and reflection. I hope that this may stimulate dialogue among Friends in this important area where reticence has heretofore been considered the better part of valor. Having

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<sup>12</sup> Jung, *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, p. 223.

begun by referring to certain queries, it may be well to conclude by proposing some of my own:

Am I always conscious of being an individual?

Even if I find myself within that most intimate of human relationships, marriage, am I conscious of that still more intimate relationship I bear to myself as an individual before God?

Am I conscious of my responsibility and my opportunity to pursue my own individuation in solitude all the way into the realization of my true self and of the Self, God within?

Do I understand the full potency and pervasiveness of the sexual drive within me, to the extent revealed by contemporary depth psychology, and do I desire to assimilate and to integrate this energy as part of the individuation process?

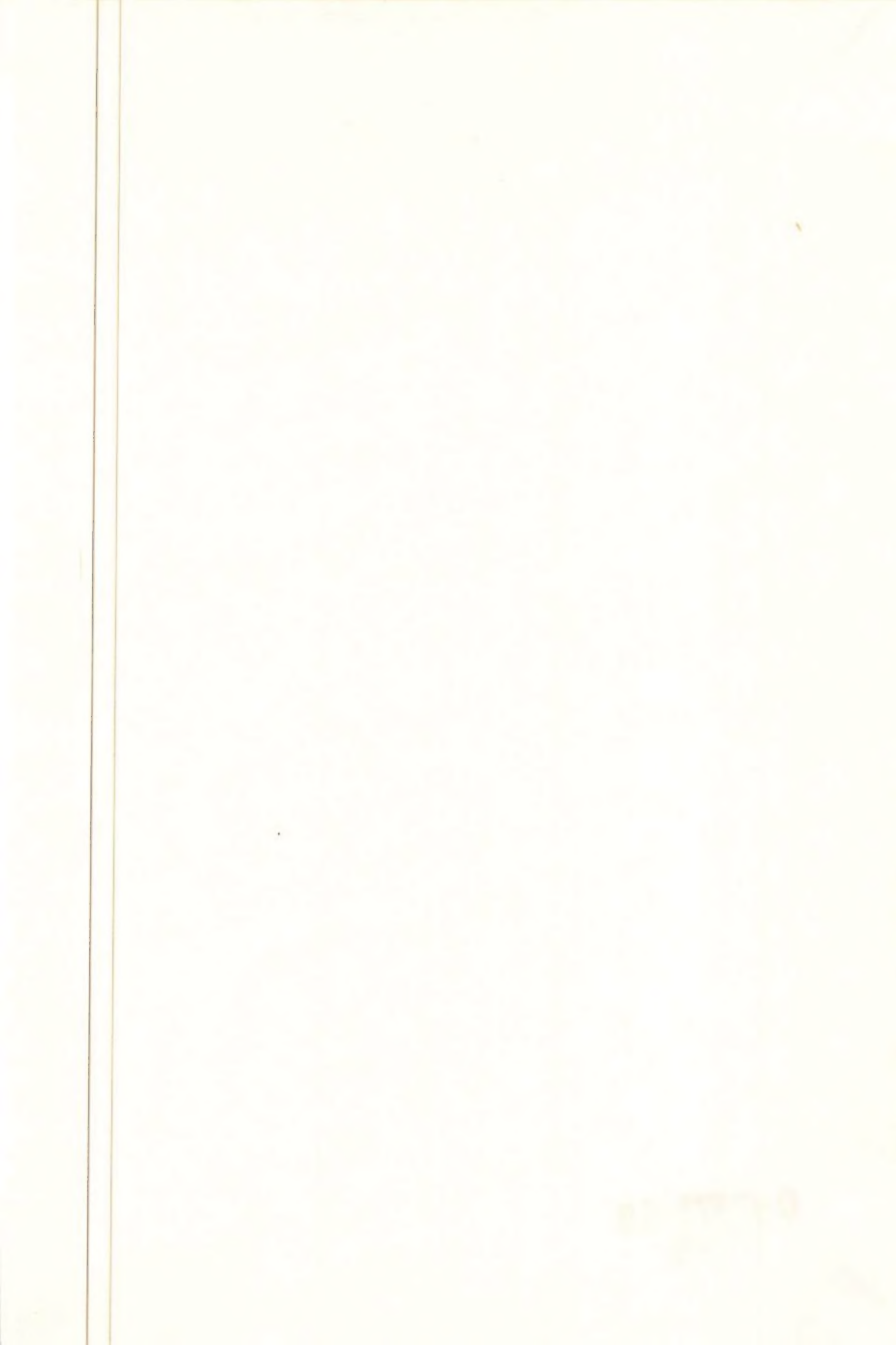
Am I prepared to master, to discipline, and, when indicated to sublimate this energy to the end of achieving integrity as a whole person, prepared to offer my maximum service to my fellows?

If I am single and have not yet found such a love in which I am prepared to invest so much of myself, do I keep myself in inward readiness for such discovery by refraining from casual, abortive, and meaningless sexual relationships?

If I am committed to one other person in lifelong union, am I resolved that this sexual relationship be characterized by chastity and purity of heart, loyalty and unselfishness, as the very sacrament of our union, for which I am prepared to make many personal sacrifices?







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